



THE ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM OF MARIN
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A NON-PROFIT CITIZEN GROUP DEVOTED TO EDUCATION IN MARIN COUNTY ON ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS.

Ms. Susan Simpson
California Department of Transportation
Office Chief, Environmental Planning North
111 Grand Avenue
Oakland, Ca. 94623

Dear Ms. Simpson:

After reviewing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Marin 101 Gap Closure Project, the Environmental Forum has the following comments to make.

The first addresses Section 5, Alternative Analysis, specifically Sub-Section 5.2.8: Alternative Considered but withdrawn - Converting Existing lanes to HOV. We would urge your consideration of a Southbound only alternative, some what different from that recommended.

Under this alternative, not only would an existing mixed flow lane be converted to HOV but it would also include an extension of the auxiliary lane system. Specifically, this extension would add an auxiliary lane between the Lincoln Avenue on ramp and the Heatherton off ramp, an exit ramp from the San Rafael Overpass and a second auxiliary lane from Anderson Drive to the Sir Francis Drake exit.

This proposal is comparable to the recently constructed stretch of I-580 between Point Richmond and I-80 and would be similar in construct to that which currently exists Northbound between Sir Francis Drake and Point San Pedro Road. In addition this construct would enhance the function of a movable barrier system proposed for the future and be a more realistic and less expensive solution for the ultimate gap closure project. Additionally, such an alternative would also encourage greater transit use by improving general traffic flow.

Our other specific comments address Sections six and seven: sub section 6.6.15 - noise, sub-section 6.6.16 visual aesthetics and subsection 7.3.4 potential mitigation sites as follows:

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(1) We urge the use of berms and green walls as a means of reducing visual blight and reflected noise.

(2) We suggest that the West Soundwall be relocated to the West side of the NWP right of way.

(3) We urge the use of specific data tested for this particular location in the construction of new walls.

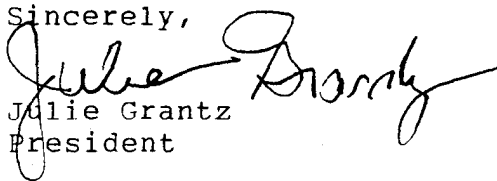
(4) We suggest that the walls be of a more soothing color than the existing walls in order to lessen the tunnel effect.

(5) We are concerned about the mitigation site suggested in Section 7.3.4. This is not an appropriate location for mitigating oak/bay/woodland habitat. We recommend that in all instances, mitigation sites be located in close proximity to the sites being mitigated and should be based on at least a 2 to 1 ratio as required in the Marin Countywide Plan.

Our final comment concerns the proposed 70 foot setback through Central San Rafael in the ultimate build out proposal. We urge that this setback be reduced to 55 feet. A 12 lane freeway through this area would create visual blight of great magnitude, will necessitate the removal of center divider planting separating North and Southbound lanes and could create a bottleneck rather than improve traffic flow.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Grantz", is written over the typed name and title.

Julie Grantz
President